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Site feasibility study

Posted: 24 August 2020



An independent site feasibility study carried out as part of the decision-making process for the location of new hospital buildings has been issued by West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust.

[The 42 page report](#) by Royal Free London Property Services[1], Montagu Evans[2] and Currie & Brown[3] will be used by the trust in its appraisal of different site options.

The trust was told in June that its bid for capital investment could be increased from £350m up to £590m. However, this higher level of funding is not guaranteed – the trust must submit a compelling business case for the additional funding and show that it can deliver new buildings by or soon after 2025 and that this can be achieved for the sum available.

The final decision on the preferred option will be made in early 2021. Before that date there is the important step of producing a shortlist. It is not possible to say at this stage which options will be on the shortlist as this will be confirmed at a board meeting (accessible to the public online) in October.

The site feasibility study will be used alongside a range of other assessment factors (which have been compiled with input from stakeholders) to reduce a range of options to a smaller number, expected to be between four and six. This shortlist will then undergo more detailed analysis during the autumn and winter.

This is all part of the outline business case (OBC) process which is carried out in line with Treasury guidance for public sector investment. The OBC concludes with a final preferred option and planning application so that a tender exercise can be undertaken to secure construction contracts. A final business case is then prepared with the detailed design and costs as well as contractual and implementation arrangements.

Six sites are included in the site feasibility study; King's Langley, East Hemel, Chiswell Green, Radlett Aerodrome, Watford General Hospital, and a combined Watford General Hospital and Watford Riverwell site.

Issues affecting suitability and availability were considered, including any potential complications regarding, for example, purchasing the land, acquiring planning permission and suitability of the site for a major hospital development.

The report states (on page 4) that "the greenfield options carry far greater risk and complexity compared to the Watford General Hospital site options evidenced in the projected achievable timelines."

Referring to the Watford General Hospital site, the report says (page 37) "Overall it is considered that it is likely for a health facility to be substantially complete on this site within 2025."

Duane Passman, the trust's Acute Redevelopment Programme Director, said: "Having been involved in many hospital builds over several decades, I know how important it is to start with the best possible options. This study provides an impartial basis for our next stage and I am grateful to those involved for their thorough approach."

He added: "I know that people feel strongly about the issue of where the new hospital buildings will be located. We will need to look at the evidence because we have a once in a generation opportunity to transform our hospital buildings and provide our communities with great facilities.

"Thankfully, we are developing more ways for patients to access care without coming to an emergency hospital site and so location will be less of an issue as we move more and more services online or into local settings.

"Whilst we can't please everyone, we can absolutely give our assurance that we will base our decisions on good evidence and will press on so that we can bring about real and lasting benefits for our patients. We continue to work towards having new buildings open in 2025 or as soon as possible after that date."

[\[1\]](#) RFL Property Services Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust and works in partnership with the trust to create and



maintain environments that support and promote good clinical outcomes, enhance the patient experience and enable staff to deliver world class care.

[2] Montagu Evans is an independent property consultancy, whose work encompasses planning and development, property management, specialist valuations and transactions.

[3] Currie & Brown is an asset management and construction consultancy, advising clients in respect of the procurement, construction, management and utilisation of their physical assets.

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1. For more information, please contact the communications team on: 01923 436280 or email: westherts.redevelopment@nhs.net. Out of hours, please call 07900 228031.
2. West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust serves people from across Hertfordshire, north London and further afield. It operates from three hospitals; Watford General, St Albans City and Hemel Hempstead. The trust has a catchment area of over 500,000 people and is one of the largest employers locally, with around 5,000 staff and volunteers.
3. For further information about the OBC please see our '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)' information sheet.
4. If you are member of the public with an interest in the future of hospital services in west Hertfordshire please think about joining the Stakeholder Reference Group and if you are member of staff or healthcare partner please fill out the Professional Reference Group form. Application forms can be found on our [website](#) under 'Find out how you can get involved'.
5. For more information about our hospitals, visit www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk. You can also join our followers on Twitter (twitter.com/westhertsNHS) and find us on Facebook (facebook.com/westhertsNHS)

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